

"I loved THE KILLING JOKE...
It's my favorite. It's the
first comic I've ever loved."

— Tim Burton

SMILE!

ALAN MOORE
BRIAN BOLLAND
BATMAN
THE KILLING JOKE

THE DELUXE EDITION

INTRODUCTION
BY TIM SALE





BATMAN THE KILLING JOKE
THE DELUXE EDITION

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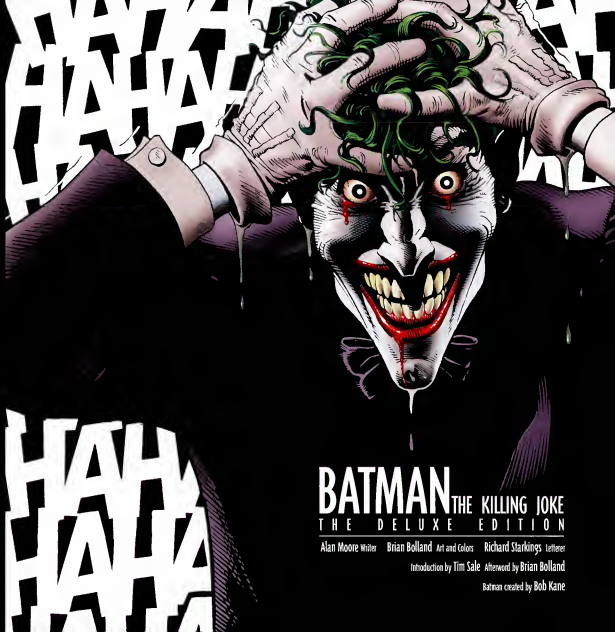
Created by Bruce Timm

Batman, The Killing Joke, The Deluxe Edition

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BATMAN THE KILLING JOKE

THE DELUXE EDITION

Alan Moore writer Brian Bolland Art and Colors Richard Starkings Letterer

Introduction by Tim Sale Afterword by Brian Bolland

Batman created by Bob Kane



INTRODUCTION

Man, how cool is this?

Like everyone who was in the mainstream comics field in the late '80s, or — as was my case — had their noses pressed against the glass, the back-to-back-to-back-to-back of DARK KNIGHT RETURNS, WATCHMEN, BATMAN: YEAR ONE, and BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE, completely reenergized the field. The characters (other than those in WATCHMEN) had been around for decades and, while many talented writers and artists had done much notable work in that time, there was an incredible sense of the new coming from Frank Miller and this handful of crazy Brits — Alan Moore, Brian Bolland, John Higgins, Richard Starkings and Dave Gibbons — who were seeing possibilities in them. In the kinds of stories that could be told, and not incidentally, in the way that a story could be presented.

WATCHMEN: THE KILLING JOKE is the only one of the stories listed above that did not first exist in another format, as a series of comics that were eventually collected into that catch-all term, a “graphic novel.” THE KILLING JOKE was a 46-page story, but it was crafted at such an astonishing level, and printed so much more cleanly and carefully, that it seemed to be a different beast altogether, not just a really great Batman comic, but something different. I didn’t get it then, but I do now.

That’s what authors of extraordinary craft can do: make the old seem new.

And thrilling. Don’t forget thrilling.

I am told that the origins of BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE go back to a Batman/Judge Dredd proposal that Moore and Bolland had cooked up. When it fell through, Moore asked Bolland what else he wanted to do, and Bolland said, “The Joker, please.”

So polite. And thus a classic was born.

Moore is famous for many things, not the least of which are his manically controlled and precisely orchestrated scripts, requiring an equal and similar effort from his great partners, and in the amazing Brian Bolland he found an artist his equal in talent, fanaticism, care, and expressiveness. Both excel in impressing with their rendering of the mundane, so that it never feels mundane. And then they blast into a reveal, a money shot so explosive that it is only then that you realize how well you, as a reader, have been lured to rest on purpose, just to set you up.

The Joker’s reveal on page 11, the tragic event on page 18, the second reveal on page 37, all orchestrated and carried out in ways that astonish, and then astonish again when you go back and see just how much these artists have known and set things up from the beginning. How fun it is to be in the hands of creators who know so much about what they are doing.

Oh, and the joke (how cool is it that the book ends with a joke) at the finish?

Priceless, luxury, and perfect for the characters of Batman and The Joker.

What you hold in your hands, though, is not the book that I own, that so inflamed(!) me and thousands of others back in 1988, because of one crucial element: the coloring.

This time around, you lucky buggers, you have the fantastic treat to see the book colored by the artist himself, and see his more complete vision of how the story should look. Side by side, the comparison is amazing.

Bolland’s colors are characteristically thoughtful and restrained. They fit the work more completely than Higgins’s state-of-the-art job in 1988 and are a joy to look at. Slow down and one can see how cool the palette is now, versus the warmer one of 1988, and how much better that reflects the somber tone of the story, and how, when Bolland injects a color from 1988 that has become iconic, like Barbara’s yellow shirt, he integrates that so well into the cooler colors in the scene, allowing the shirt to really pop and ratchet up the horror of the event.

But the biggest and most amazing change in this newly colored edition is in the flashback sequences.

Bolland washes out all color in such one, but chooses to spotlight an object in each — a bowl of tentacles, a ship, and so on — in interestingly

intense shades of red, all leading up to there’s that sense that everything has been planned from the start by masterful hands) the red hood that was posited to be The Joker’s mostly forgotten origin, way back in 1955, and the transformation of the misquorate failed comedian to insane criminal mastermind.

Brrrrr. I just got chills.

Anyone else get chills?

Man, how cool is this?

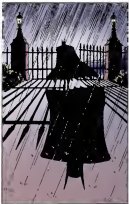
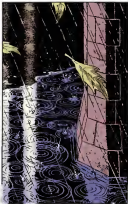
Tim Sale

Pasadena, CA 3008

Tim Sale lives in southern California with his aged dogs Notapup and Shelby. Raised in Seattle, he still finds California an odd place, though he hopes that will change someday.

Tim is the artist on BATMAN: DARK VICTORY; CATWOMAN: WHEN IN ROME; BATMAN: THE LONG HALLOWEEN and many other titles.

In 2006, Tim became the artist for the hit NBC television series Heroes.







THERE WERE THESE TWO
GUYS IN A LUNATIC
ASYLUM ...









"WHERE IS HE?"

AN! THERE YOU ARE!

HAVE YOU HAD A CHANCE TO INSPECT THE PROPERTY AND DECIDE IF IT'S WHAT YOU WERE LOOKING FOR?

WELL, IT'S GARISH, UGLY, AND DERELICTS HAVE USED IT FOR A TOILET.

THE RIDES ARE DELAPIDATED TO THE POINT OF BEING LETHAL, AND COULD EASILY MAIM OR KILL INNOCENT LITTLE CHILDREN.

OH, SO YOU DON'T LIKE IT?



DON'T LIKE IT?

I'M CRAZY FOR IT.

YOU...? YOU REALLY WANT TO BUY IT? AND THE PRICE I MENTIONED, IT ISN'T TOO STEEP...?

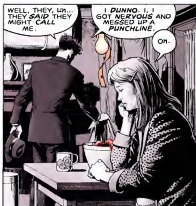
TOO STEEP? MY DEAR SIR, AS I LOOK AT IT I'M MAKING A KILLING...



... AND ANYWAY, MONEY ISN'T REALLY A PROBLEM.



NOT THESE DAYS.



I DON'T MEAN TO TAKE IT OUT ON YOU. YOU'RE SUIH-SUFFERING ENOUGH, BEING MARRIED TO A LOSER.

HONEY, THAT'S NOT...

IT'S TRUE. I CAN'T SUPPORT YOU. OH JEANNIE, WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

IT'LL BE OKAY.

JUNIOR WON'T BE HERE FOR ANOTHER THREE MONTHS, AND I THINK MRS. BURKISS WILL LET THE RENT GO A LITTLE LONGER. SHE FEELS SORRY FOR ME.

SHE HATES ME.

SHE COMES OUT INTO THE HALLWAY TO SCOWL AT ME EVERY TIME I GO UPSTAIRS.

THIS HOUSE STINKS OF CAT LITTER AND OLD PEOPLE.

I'VE GOT TO GET YOU OUT OF HERE BEFORE THE BABY COMES...

I JUST WANT ENOUGH MONEY TO GET SET UP IN A DECENT NEIGHBORHOOD.

THERE ARE GIRLS ON THE STREET WHO EARN THAT IN A WEEKEND WITHOUT HAVING TO TELL A SINGLE JOKE.

HA HA HA HA

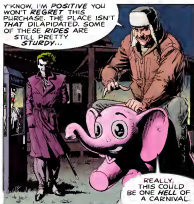
HONEY, DON'T WORRY. NOT ABOUT ANY OF IT. I STILL LOVE YOU. Y'KNOW? JOB OR NO JOB, YOU'RE GOOD IN THE SACK...

... AND YOU KNOW HOW TO MAKE ME LAUGH.

LAUGHING CLOWN

JUST PUT A PENNY IN THE COIN

Y'KNOW, I'M POSITIVE YOU WON'T REGRET THIS PURCHASE. THE PLACE ISN'T THAT DILAPIDATED. SOME OF THESE RIDES ARE STILL PRETTY STURDY...



REALLY, THIS COULD BE ONE HELL OF A CARNIVAL.

OH, YOU'RE SO RIGHT.

THANKS TO YOUR SMOOTH SALESMANSHIP AND YOUR SILVER TONGUE YOU'VE COMPLETELY SOLD ME ON THE PLACE. LET'S SHAKE ON IT.



UH... WELL, SURE. IT'S MY PRIVILEGE...

INDEED IT IS.

NATURALLY, I WON'T BE PAYING YOU ANYTHING. MY COLLEAGUES PERSUADED YOUR PARTNER TO SIGN THE NECESSARY DOCUMENTS JUST OVER AN HOUR AGO.

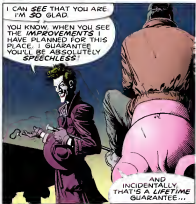


THE PROPERTY'S MINE ALREADY.

YOU'RE HAPPY WITH THAT, I TAKE IT?

I CAN SEE THAT YOU ARE I'M SO GLAD.

YOU KNOW, WHEN YOU SEE THE IMPROVEMENTS I HAVE PLANNED FOR THIS PLACE, I GUARANTEE YOU'LL BE ABSOLUTELY SPEECHLESS!



AND INCIDENTALLY, THAT'S A LIFETIME GUARANTEE...

WELL, I MUST DASH. THERE'S EQUIPMENT TO HIRE, PLUS WORKERS WHO'LL SUIT THE GENERAL TONE OF THE ESTABLISHMENT...

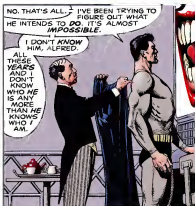


... AND THEN, OF COURSE, I'VE YET TO SECURE MY MAIN ATTRACTION.

DO FEEL FREE TO STICK AROUND.







I HATE THIS. WHENEVER WE JAIL HIM, I THINK "PLEASE GOD, KEEP HIM THERE." THEN HE ESCAPES AND WE ALL SIT ROUND HOPING HE WON'T DO ANYTHING TOO AWFUL THIS TIME.



I HATE IT.



DAD, JUST ONCE COULD YOU LEAVE YOUR WORK AT THE OFFICE AND RELAX? I MADE YOU COCCA.

THANK YOU, SWEETHEART. I'LL DRINK IT WHEN I'VE PASTED THIS LATEST CLIPPING IN.



Y'KNOW, I FOUND THAT CAT-WOMAN SCRAPBOOK YOU SAID WAS MISSING. IT WAS BEHIND THE WARDROBE.

SOME DAY YOU OUGHT TO LET ME WORK OUT A PROPER FILING SYSTEM, LIKE WE USED AT THE LIBRARY.

Hmm.



LURRRH. LOOK, YOU USED TOO MUCH PASTE! IT'S ALL SQUIDDING UNDER THE EDGES OF THE CLIPPING. YOU'RE GOING TO GET IT ON YOUR PANTS...

BARBARA, YOU'RE FUSSIER THAN YOUR MOTHER WA...

WAS THAT THE DOOR?



YEAH, IT'LL BE COLLEEN FROM ACROSS THE STREET. TONIGHT'S OUR YOGA CLASS.

C'MON, DAD... COMPANY! PUT YOUR SCRAPBOOKS AWAY.

BAT-GARBED VIGILANTE CRITICALLY INJURES MURDERER!



DISFIGURED HOMICIDAL MANIAC IN HOSPITAL

HEH. LOOK AT THIS ONE. FIRST TIME THEY MET. NOW WHAT YEAR WAS THAT?

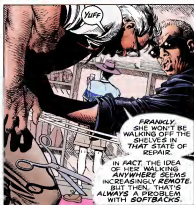


WELL, I REMEMBER YOU DESCRIBING YOU DESCRIBING THE WHITE FACE AND THE GREEN HAIR TO ME WHEN I WAS A KID. SCARED THE HELL OUT OF ME.

I THOUGHT YOU'D BE INTERESTED...

YEAH, WELL, I HAD SOME INTERESTING NIGHTMARES.





Y'SEE... YSEE, I HAVE TO PROVE MYSELF AS A HUSBAND. AND, AND AS A FATHER!

I MEAN, I, WELL, I WOULDN'T BE DOING THIS SORT OF THING IF, IF IT WASN'T SOMETHING IMPORTANT.



IT'S LIKE, I BEGAN AS A LAB ASSISTANT. RIGHT? WAS A GOOD JOB. REAL GOOD JOB.

SO, WHAT I DID, I QUIT TO BECOME A COMEDIAN. I WAS SO SURE. SO SURE I HAD TALENT.



BUT, HA, WELL, LOOK AT ME. I GUESS MY TALENTS DIDN'T LIE IN THAT DIRECTION.

SO, YOU SEE, LIKE, IF I JUST DO THIS ONE BIG CRIME...

HEY, JEEZ, MAN, BE COOL.



I'M SORRY. I'M SORRY, I DON'T USUALLY DRINK LUNCHTIMES...

IT'S JUST, IF YOU'RE SURE WE CAN GET AWAY WITH THIS THING AND THAT NOBODY WILL KNOW I WAS INVOLVED...

DON'T WORRY, FRIEND. WE'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU.



WE NEED YOUR HELP GETTING THROUGH THAT CHEMICAL PLANT WHERE YOU WORKED TO THE PLAYING CARD COMPANY NEXT DOOR.

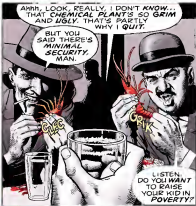
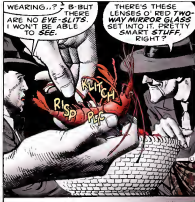


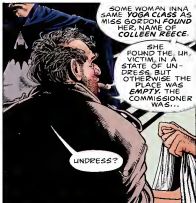
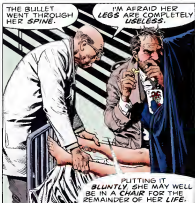
WE REALLY APPRECIATE YOUR EXPERTISE.

SO, LIKE, TO ABSOLUTELY GUARANTEE NOBODY CONNECTS YOU WITH THE MORNIN'...

... YOU'LL BE WEAKING THIS.









BARBARA?



BARBARA
CAN YOU HEAR
ME?

IT'S ME.

IT'S
BRUCE.



BRUCE...?



BRUCE... IT
WAS HIM...
TOOK DAD...
H-HE...

OH GOD!
OH GOD, I
REMEMBER!
OH, BRUCE,
WHAT HE
DID...

BARBARA,
TAKE IT EASY.
IT'S OKAY...



NO! NO, IT'S NOT
OKAY! HE'S... HE'S
TAKING IT TO THE
LIMIT THIS
TIME...

YOU
DIDN'T
SEE

YOU
DIDN'T SEE
HIS EYES.



H-HE SAID
HE WANTED TO
PUH-PROVE A
POINT... SAID
...DAD WAS...
TOP OF THE
BILL...

WH-WHAT'S
HE DOING TO
HIM, BRUCE?



WHAT'S
HE DOING TO MY
FATHER?







YOU.
OH NO...
I
REMEMBER.



REMEMBER? OH, I WOULDN'T DO THAT! REMEMBERING'S DANGEROUS. I FIND THE PAST SUCH A WORRYING, ANXIOUS PLACE.

"THE PAST TENSE" I SUPPOSE YOU'D CALL IT, HA HA HA.



MEMORY'S SO TREACHEROUS. ONE MOMENT YOU'RE LOST IN A CARNIVAL OF DELIGHTS, WITH POIGNANT CHILDHOOD AROMAS, THE FLASHING NEON OF PUBERTY, ALL THAT SENTIMENTAL CANDY-FLOSS ...

THE NEXT, IT LEADS YOU SOMEWHERE YOU DON'T WANT TO GO...

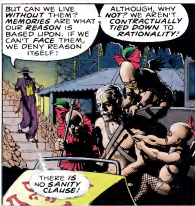
HOORR



... SOMEWHERE DARK AND COLD, FILLED WITH THE DAMP, AMBIGUOUS SHAPES OF THINGS YOU'D HOPED WERE FORGOTTEN.

MEMORIES CAN BE VILE, REPULSIVE LITTLE BRUTES, LIKE CHILDREN, I SUPPOSE. HAHA.

BARBARA
Oh NO. Oh NO...



BUT CAN WE LIVE WITHOUT THEM? MEMORIES ARE WHAT OUR REASON IS BASED UPON. IF WE CAN'T FACE THEM, WE DENY REASON ITSELF!

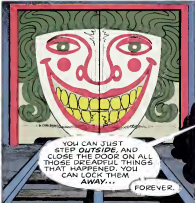
ALTHOUGH, WHY NOT? WE AREN'T CONTRACTUALLY TIED DOWN TO RATIONALITY!

THERE IS NO SANITY CLAUSE!



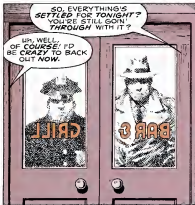
SO WHEN YOU FIND YOURSELF LOCKED ONTO AN UNPLEASANT TRAIN OF THOUGHT, HEADING FOR THE PLACES IN YOUR PAST WHERE THE SCREAMING IS UNBEARABLE, REMEMBER THERE'S ALWAYS MADNESS.

MADNESS IS THE EMERGENCY EXIT...



YOU CAN JUST STEP OUTSIDE, AND CLOSE THE DOOR ON ALL THOSE DREADFUL THINGS THAT HAPPENED. YOU CAN LOCK THEM AWAY...

FOREVER.



LISTEN, I HATE TO BREAK IT TO YOU LIKE THIS. IT WAS A MILLION TO ONE ACCIDENT! THEY HAVE FULL DETAILS WAITING FOR YOU AT THE HOSPITAL.

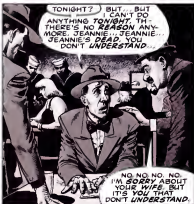
THERE'S NO HURRY.

IF I WAS YOU, I'D HAVE ANOTHER DRINK.



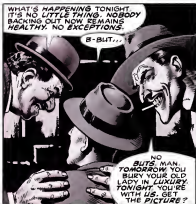
MY WIFE. SHE'S DEAD. MY WIFE...
GEE, THAT'S TERRIBLE. WE'RE REALLY SORRY.

YEAH, HEY, LISTEN, MAN, YOU PROBABLY WANNA BE LEFT ALONE RIGHT NOW. HUH? WE'LL SEE YOU HERE TONIGHT. OKAY?



TONIGHT? BUT... BUT I CAN'T DO ANYTHING TONIGHT. THERE'S NO REASON ANYMORE. JEANNIE... JEANNIE'S DEAD. YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND...

NO NO NO. NO. I'M SORRY ABOUT YOUR WIFE BUT IT'S YOUR THAT DON'T UNDERSTAND.



WHAT'S HAPPENING TONIGHT. IT'S NO LITTLE THING. NOBODY BACKING OUT NOW REMAINS HEALTHY. NO EXCEPTIONS.

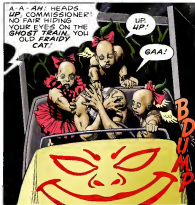
B-BUT...

NO BUTS, MAN. TOMORROW YOU BURY YOUR OLD LADY IN LUXURY. TONIGHT, YOU'RE WITH US. GET THE PICTURE?



YES. YES, I GET THE PICTURE.





A-A-AH! HEADS UP, COMMISSIONER! NO FAIR HIDING YOUR EYES ON THE GHOST TRAIN, YOU OLD FRAIDY CAT!

UP, UP!

GAA!

B
D
U
M
P



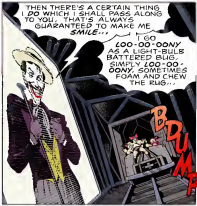
OH, I KNOW... YOU'RE CONFUSED YOU'RE FRIGHTENED WHO WOULDN'T BE? YOU'RE IN A HELL OF A SITUATION!

BUT, Y'KNOW, THOUGH LIFE'S A BOWL OF CHERRIES AND THIS IS THE PITS, ALWAYS REMEMBER THIS...

MUSIC... SAM...



WHEN THE WORLD IS FULL OF CARE AND EVERY HEADLINE SCREAMS DESPAIR, WHEN ALL IS RAPE, STARVATION, WAR AND LIFE IS VILE...



THEN THERE'S A CERTAIN THING I DO WHICH I SHALL PASS ALONG TO YOU... THAT'S ALWAYS GUARANTEED TO MAKE ME SMILE...

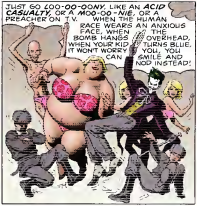
I GO LOO-OO-OONY AS A LIGHT-BULB BATTERED BUG. SIMPLY LOO-OO-OONY, SOMETIMES FOAM AND CHEW THE RUG...

B
D
U
M
P



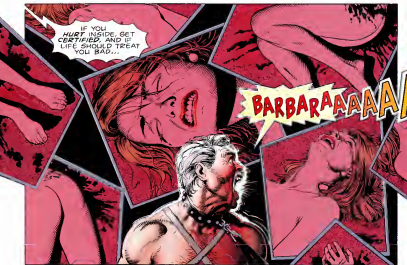
MISTER, LIFE IS SWELL IN A PADDED CELL, IT'LL CHASE THOSE BLUES AWAY...

YOU CAN TRADE YOUR GLOOM FOR A RUBBER ROOM, AND INJECTIONS TWICE A DAY!



JUST GO LOO-OO-OONY, LIKE AN ACID CASUALTY, OR A MOO-OO-NIE, OR A PREACHER ON TV.

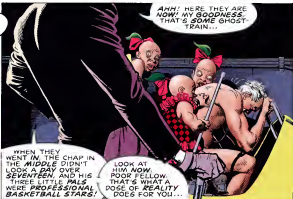
WHEN THE HUMAN RACE WEARS AN ANXIOUS FACE, WHEN THE BOMB HANGS OVERHEAD, WHEN YOUR KID TURNS BLUE, IT WON'T WORRY YOU, YOU CAN SMILE AND NOD INSTEAD!







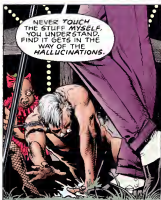
BUMP



AAH! HERE THEY ARE NOW! MY GODDNESS, THAT'S SOME GHOST-TRAIN...

WHEN THEY WENT IN, THE CHAP IN THE MIDDLE DIDN'T LOOK A DAY OVER SEVENTEEN, AND HIS THREE LITTLE PALS WERE PROFESSIONAL BASKETBALL STARS!

LOOK AT HIM NOW, POOR FELLOW, THAT'S WHAT A DOSE OF REALITY DOES FOR YOU...



NEVER TOUCH THE STUFF MYSELF, YOU UNDERSTAND, FIND IT GETS IN THE WAY OF THE MALLUCINATIONS.

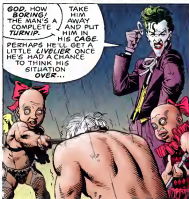


WHY, HELLO COMMISSIONER! HOW'S THINGS?

COMMISSIONER?

HELLO?

ANYBODY HOME?



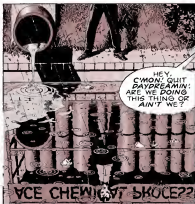
GOD, HOW BORING! THE MAN'S A COMPLETE TURNIP.

TAKE HIM AWAY AND PUT HIM IN HIS CAGE.

PERHAPS HE'LL GET A LITTLE LIVELIER ONCE HE'S HAD A CHANCE TO THINK HIS SITUATION OVER...



... TO REFLECT UPON LIFE, AND ALL ITS RANDOM INJUSTICE.



HEY, C'MON. QUIT DAYDREAMIN'. ARE WE DOING THIS THING OR AIN'T WE?

VOICE CHEWING AT SKOCE???



UH, YES. YES. I WAS, I WAS JUST REMEMBERING... I USED TO WALK ALONG HERE ON THE WAY TO WORK EACH MORNING...

YEAH, YEAH. NOW PUT THIS SUCKER ON, MAN. AN' SHIT UP.



WHAT, RIGHT NOW? I MEAN... I MEAN... ARE YOU SURE IT'S OKAY?

WILL I BE ABLE TO BREATHE?

HEY, MAN. EVERYTHING'S COOL. JEEZ... Y'KNOW, YOU GOT A FUNNY-SHAPED HEAD...



THERE. YOU STILL SEE OKAY, MAN?

WUH, WELL, YEAH. I GUESS, EXCEPT EVERYTHING'S RED... IT'S KINDA STUFFY TOO, AND IT SMELLS FUNNY. DOES MY VOICE SOUND ECHOEY TO YOU?



YOU SOUND GREAT, NOW... HOW ABOUT GUIDIN' US THROUGH THIS STINKIN' FACTORY TO THE JOINT NEXT DOOR?

SURE. SURE THING. Y'KNOW... THIS FEELS KINDA WEIRD, LIKE A DREAM. I KEEP REMEMBERING JEANNIE...

WATCH OUT, MAN. STEPS.



OKAY... WE GO THROUGH HERE, PAST THE FILTER TANKS AND THEN MONARCH PLAYING CARDS IS JUST BEYOND A PARTITION.

Y'KNOW, THIS PLACE... IT LOOKS EVEN WORSE IN RED. IT LOOKS LIKE...

HEY, YOU! FREEEEZE!

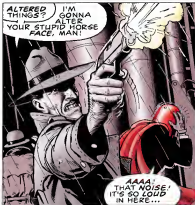


C'MON, C'MON. GET 'EM UP!

YOU ASSHOLE! YOU SAID THERE WAS NO SECURITY!

THEY... THEY MUST HAVE ALTERED THINGS SINCE I LEFT...

FACE CHEWING AT SKOCE???





AHIIIIHHH!...
AHIIIIHHH!

THAT'S
SO FUNNY.

THAT'S
SO FUNNY.

AUP!
HA-HUFF!

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!
YOU'VE READ ABOUT IT IN THE
NEWSPAPERS! NOW, SHUDDER
AS YOU OBSERVE, BEFORE YOUR
VERY EYES, THAT MOST RARE
AND TRAGIC OF NATURE'S
MISTAKES!

I GIVE
YOU... THE
AVERAGE
MAN!

OOHHH...

PHYSICALLY
UNREMARKABLE,
IT HAS INSTEAD
A DEFORMED SET
OF VALUES.

NOTICE THE HIDEOUSLY
BLOATED SENSE OF
HUMANITY'S IMPORT-
ANCE, THE CLUB-
FOOTED SOCIAL
CONSCIENCE AND THE
WITHERED
OPTIMISM.

IT'S
CERTAINLY
NOT FOR THE
SQUEAMISH
IS IT?

MOST REPULSIVE OF
ALL, ARE ITS FRAIL
AND USELESS NOTIONS
OF ORDER AND SANITY.
IF TOO MUCH WEIGHT
IS PLACED UPON
THEM...

...THEY
SNAP.

HOW DOES
IT LIVE, I
HEAR YOU
ASK?

HOW DOES THIS
POOR, PATHETIC
SPECIMEN
SURVIVE IN
TODAY'S HARSH
AND IRRATIONAL
WORLD?

THE
SAD
ANSWER
IS "NOT
VERY
WELL."

FACED WITH THE INESCAP-
ABLE FACT THAT HUMAN
EXISTENCE IS MAD, RAN-
DOM AND POINTLESS, ONE
IN EIGHT OF THEM CRACK
UP AND GO STARK
SLAVERING
BUGGO!

WHO CAN
BLAME THEM?
IN A WORLD AS
PSYCHOTIC AS THIS...

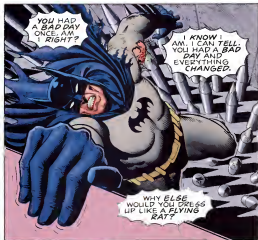
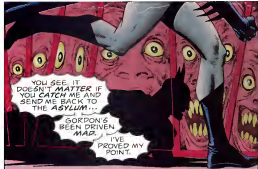
... ANY
OTHER
RESPONSE
WOULD BE
CRAZY!













I MEAN, WHAT IS IT WITH YOU? WHAT MADE YOU WHAT YOU ARE?

GIRLFRIEND
KILLED BY THE
MOB. MAYBE?
BROTHER CARVED
UP BY SOME
MUGGER?

SOME-
THING LIKE
THAT, I BET.
SOMETHING
LIKE THAT...



SOMETHING
LIKE THAT
HAPPENED TO
ME, YOU KNOW.
I... I'M NOT
EXACTLY
SURE WHAT
IT WAS. SOME-
TIMES I
REMEMBER IT
ONE WAY,
SOMETIMES
ANOTHER...

IF I'M
GOING TO HAVE A
PAST, I PREFER IT
TO BE MULTIPLE
CHOICE! HA HA HA!



BUT MY POINT
IS... MY POINT
IS, I WENT
CRAZY.

WHEN I
SAW WHAT A
BLACK, AWFUL JOKE
THE WORLD WAS, I
WENT CRAZY AS A
COOT! I ADMIT IT!

WHY
CAN'T
YOU?



I MEAN, YOU'RE NOT
UNINTELLIGENT! YOU
MUST SEE THE
REALITY OF THE
SITUATION.

ALL OF MIRROR

DO YOU
KNOW HOW MANY
TIMES WE'VE COME
CLOSE TO WORLD
WAR THREE OVER A
FLOCK OF GEESSE ON
A COMPUTER SCREEN?



DO YOU KNOW WHAT TRIGGERED
THE LAST WORLD WAR? AN
ARGUMENT OVER HOW MANY
TELEGRAPH POLES GERMANY
OWED ITS WAR DEBT
CREDITORS!

TELEGRAPH
POLES! HA HA
HA HA HA!



IT'S ALL A JOKE! EVERYTHING
ANYBODY EVER VALUED OR
STRUGGLED FOR... IT'S ALL
A MONSTROUS, DEMENTED
GAG!

SO
WHY CAN'T
YOU SEE THE
FUNNY
SIDE?

WHY
AREN'T YOU
LAUGHING?



INCIDENTALLY, I SPOKE TO COMMISSIONER GORDON BEFORE I CAME IN HERE. HE'S FINE.

DESPITE ALL YOUR SICK, VICIOUS LITTLE GAMES, HE'S AS SAFE AS HE EVER WAS.



SO MAYBE ORDINARY PEOPLE DON'T ALWAYS CRACK.



MAYBE THERE ISN'T ANY NEED TO CRAWL UNDER A ROCK WITH ALL THE OTHER SLIMEY THINGS WHEN TROUBLE HITS...

MAYBE IT WAS JUST YOU, ALL THE TIME.



NO!

UNNGH



DON'T...

AHAH!
AHAH!




HHWT

NNMF



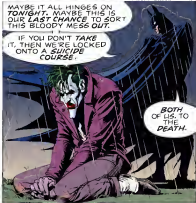




DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
I DON'T WANT TO HURT
YOU. I DON'T WANT
EITHER OF US TO END
UP KILLING THE
OTHER...

BUT
WE'RE BOTH
RUNNING OUT OF
ALTERNATIVES...

... AND
WE BOTH
KNOW IT.



MAYBE IT ALL HINGES ON
TONIGHT. MAYBE THIS IS
OUR LAST CHANCE TO SORT
THIS BLOODY MESS OUT.

IF YOU DON'T TAKE
IT, THEN WE'RE LOCKED
ONTO A SUICIDE
COURSE.

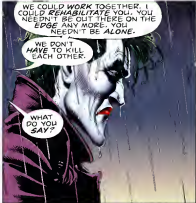
BOTH
OF US, TO
THE
DEATH.



IT DOESN'T
HAVE TO END
LIKE THAT. I
DON'T KNOW
WHAT IT WAS
THAT BENT
YOUR LIFE
OUT OF
SHAPE, BUT
WHO
KNOWS?

MAYBE
I'VE BEEN
THERE
TOO.

MAYBE
I CAN
HELP.



WE COULD WORK TOGETHER. I
COULD REHABILITATE YOU. YOU
NEEDN'T BE OUT THERE ON THE
EDGE ANY MORE. YOU
NEEDN'T BE ALONE.

WE DON'T
HAVE TO KILL
EACH OTHER.

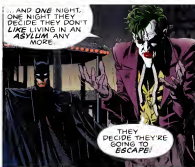
WHAT
DO YOU
SAY?



NO, I'M
SORRY,
BUT...

NO, IT'S TOO
LATE FOR THAT.
FAR TOO LATE.

HAHAHA.
Y'KNOW, IT'S FUNNY...
THIS SITUATION, IT
REMINDS ME OF
A JOKE...



I DONT CONSIDER MYSELF
A BAD PERSON.

ON THE WHOLE I
CONSIDER MYSELF A
GOOD PERSON.



I'M GOOD TO MY PARENTS
I TREAT MY GIRL RIGHT... TAKE
HER OUT AND BUY HER STUFF,
AND I GO TO CHURCH
EVERY SUNDAY.



BUT I'VE DECIDED THAT JUST
ONCE I WANNA DO A REALLY
BAD THING. I MEAN A REALLY
SERIOUSLY BAD THING.



'CAUSE, YA KNOW, LIKE, WE'RE PKT ON THIS
EARTH WITH FREE WILL. WE CAN CHOOSE TO
DO THIS OR THAT. WE CAN CHOOSE TO BE
GOOD OR BAD. BUT SOMETIMES I THINK
MOST PEOPLE ARE GOOD AND NOT BAD
ONLY BECAUSE THEY'RE SCARED
THEY MIGHT GO TO JAIL OR HELL
OR SOMEPLACE.



SOME GUY ONCE SAID: "ANYTHING DONE OUT
OF FEAR HAS NO MORAL VALUE." WELL, I THINK
THAT'S RIGHT. I FIGURE THE ONLY WAY YOU
CAN BE TRULY GOOD IS IF YOU'VE TRIED
BEING GOOD AND YOU'VE TRIED BEING
BAD, AND BEING GOOD
FEELS BETTER.



SO WHAT IS IT TO BE, THIS ONE BAD THING?
IT'S GOTTA BE SOMETHING COMPLETELY CRUEL
AND HORRIBLE... AND UNNECESSARY... AND...
AND... MOTIVELESS.

'CAUSE GETTING
CAUGHT IS NOT ON
MY AGENDA.



THERE'S AN OLD DISHED SEWER
SHAFT OUT IN A PLACE I KNOW WHERE
NO ONE EVER GOES.

I THOUGHT I'D KIDNAP
A LITTLE GIRL AND CHAIN HER
UP DOWN THERE AND LEAVE HER
THERE WEeping AND WAILING
IN THE DARK TILL SHE STARVED
TO DEATH.



YA GOTTA UNDERSTAND I'M NOT SOME KIND
OF PERVERT OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT, BUT
WHATEVER I CAN DO TO MAKE HER
FEEL WORSE AND RUIN THE LIVES
OF HER FAMILY, I'LL DO.

BUT SOMEHOW THIS
ISN'T ENOUGH.



IT'S GOTTA BE A BIGGER THING
SOMEHOW SOMETHING THAT'LL LEAVE
A MARK ON MORE PEOPLE LIKE
THE KILLING OF JOHN LENNON. IT'S
GOTTA BE SOMEBODY
FAMOUS.



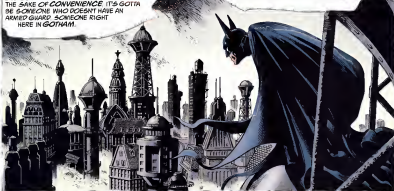
I THOUGHT ABOUT THE POPE. BUT HE'S
ALWAYS SURROUNDED BY THOSE SECRET
SERVICE GUYS AND RIDIN' AROUND IN HIS
BULLETPROOF ROPEMOBILE.

AH' WELL. I DON'T GET OVER
TO ITALY VERY OFTEN ... IN
FACT NEVER.



I'VE GOTTA CHOOSE MY VICTIM FOR
THE SAKE OF CONVENIENCE IT'S GOTTA
BE SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T HAVE AN
ARMED GUARD SOMEONE RIGHT
HERE IN GOTHAM.

IT'S GOTTA BE THE BATMAN.



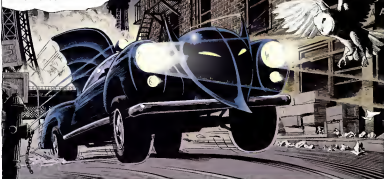
IT'LL BE NO PROBLEM. I'VE GOT A GUN. MY DAD GAVE IT TO ME. HE HAS A WHOLE COLLECTION. HE'S A GREAT BELIEVER IN A CITIZEN'S RIGHT TO BEAR ARMS. IT'S A GUN LIKE A MILLION OTHERS IN THIS CITY.

I'LL DO THE DEED... MY DAD TAUGHT ME HOW TO SHOOT, TOO... THEN I'LL LEAVE THE SCENE. I WON'T LEAVE A CALLING CARD, A DOUBLE-HEADED COIN, A CODED RIDDLE, AND I WON'T LAUGH LIKE A MADMAN. I'LL JUST LEAVE WITHOUT A TRACE.

I MEAN, FOR ALL I KNOW, RIGHT NOW HE COULD BE IN HIS SECRET HIDEOUT SOMEWHERE HUNG OVER HIS SECRET SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM MONITORING EVERYTHING I RECORD ON THIS TAPE.

BUT I'M SURE HE ISN'T 'CAUSE HE'S ONE OF THE GOOD GUYS AND SPYIN' ON INNOCENT PEOPLE WOULD BE WRONG.

NO. RIGHT NOW HE'S ON THE TRAIL OF SOME CRIMINAL...





HIS GREAT BAT-WINGS
UNFURLED AGAINST
THE NIGHT SKY...

STRIKING TERROR INTO THE
HEARTS OF THE GUILTY.

AN INSPIRATION AND
A COMFORT TO THE
INNOCENT.

HE'LL BE SADLY MISSED

ESPECIALLY BY ME



ONE DAY HE'LL BE FACE TO FACE
WITH TWO-FACE...

OR HE'LL BE TANGLING WITH
POISON IVY...



OR IN THE LAIR OF... THOSE
THREE GUYS WITH ANIMAL
MASKS WHOSE NAMES I
CAN NEVER REMEMBER!



THERE'LL BE A
FIGHT AND A
THRILLING CHASE
INVOLVING AN
ENORMOUS
TYPEWRITER OR
SOMETHING.



THE GOOD GUY'LL MAKE
A DRAMATIC EXIT

LEAVING THE BAD GUY
TO PONDER THE ERROR
OF HIS WAYS

'CAUSE LET'S FACE IT,
CRIME DOESN'T PAY



AND JUST FOR ONE MOMENT
THE BATMAN WILL PAUSE, THRU
HIS FACE ILLUMINATED BY A SINGLE
LIGHT... A SPLENDID AVENGER
OF THE NIGHT.

AND THEN FROM A DARK ALLEY,

OR A WINDOW
HIGH UP

OR A GRASSY
KNOLL,

OR SOME OTHER
PLACE,

THERE'LL BE
A GLINT,

AND THEN

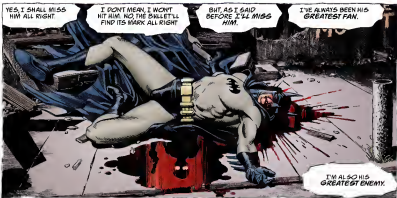


BANG





AND HE'LL
BE DEAD.



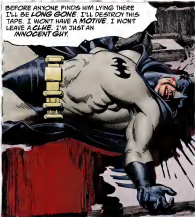
YES, I SHALL MISS
HIM ALL RIGHT.

I DON'T MEAN, I WON'T
HIT HIM. NO, THE BULLET'LL
FIND ITS MARK ALL RIGHT

BUT, AS I SAID
BEFORE, I'LL MISS
HIM.

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN HIS
GREATEST FAN.

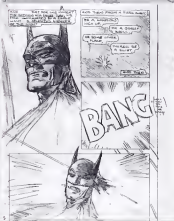
I'M ALSO HIS
GREATEST ENEMY.



BEFORE ANYONE FINDS HIM LYING THERE
I'LL BE LONG GONE. I'LL DESTROY THIS
TAPE. I WON'T HAVE A MOTIVE. I WON'T
LEAVE A CLUE. I'M JUST AN
INNOCENT GUY.

THEN I THINK I'LL FINISH MY COLLEGE
EDUCATION. MARRY MY GIRL FRIEND AND
HAVE A COUPLE OF KIDS. A BOY AND
A GIRL WOULD BE NICE. LIVE A
GOOD AND BLAMELESS
LIFE, AND GO TO HEAVEN
WHEN I DIE.





From the files of Brian Bolland

Figures 1 and 2 are giving away a closely guarded professional secret: Yes, I still use photographic reference for the cover of THE KILLING JOKE. Since it's a mirror image of me in the photo you'll notice that it's actually the thumb of my left hand that's pressing the button to take the picture. The resulting sketch is probably the most thorough cover rough I've ever drawn and the only one in color. I must have been very keen to push the idea.

The evil dwarves (figure 3) were written into the script by Alan and given the names of three characters owned by another major company — so they can't be registered here. I always wanted to apologize to any persons of diminutive stature who might be reading this for our lack of political correctness.

As with the artwork, all the small "prelim" pages are now in the hands of collectors, and figure 4 is the only one we could track down. I had more success with the Innocent Guy pencils. I have copies of some of them here (figures 5, 9, 10). This, incidentally, was the form in which I originally wrote the story and presented it to my editor, Mark Charell.

Figure 6 was drawn in Paris (with a series of markers that were running low on ink, by the looks of things) and Italian artist Terno ultimately produced a painted version of it for the french edition of THE KILLING JOKE. Figures 7 and 8 are sketches of the Joker in his various guises.

ALAN MOORE

Alan Moore is perhaps the most acclaimed writer in the graphic story medium, having garnered countless awards for such works as WATCHMEN, V FOR VENDETTA, *From Hell*, *Miraclemans* and SWAMP THING. He is also the mastermind behind the America's Best Comics line, through which he has created (along with many talented illustrators) THE LEAGUE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENTLEMEN, PROMETHEA, TOM STRONG, TOMORROW STORIES and TOP TEN. As one of the medium's most important innovators since the early 1980s, Moore has influenced an entire generation of comics creators, and his work continues to inspire an ever-growing audience. Moore resides in central England.

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"Easily the greatest Joker story ever told, *BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE* is also one of Alan Moore's finest works. If you've read it before, go back and read it again. You owe it to yourself!"
—IGN.com

"...a genuinely chilling portrayal of Batman's greatest foe."
—Booklist

One bad day.

According to the grinning engine of madness and mayhem known as the Joker, that's all that separates the sane from the psychotic. Freed once again from the confines of Arkham Asylum, he's out to prove his deranged point. And he's going to use Gotham City's top cop, Commissioner Jim Gordon, and his brilliant and beautiful daughter Barbara to do it.

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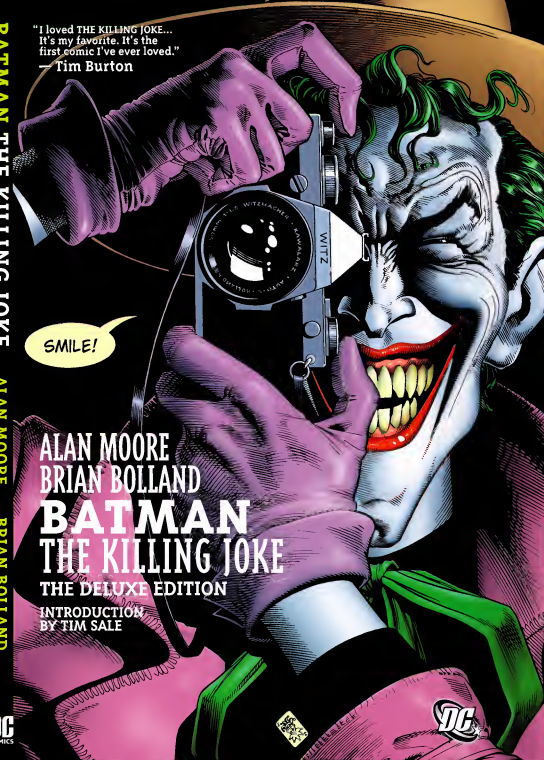
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BATMAN THE KILLING JOKE

ALAN MOORE

BRIAN BOLLAND

"I loved *THE KILLING JOKE*... It's my favorite. It's the first comic I've ever loved."
—Tim Burton



SMILE!

**ALAN MOORE
BRIAN BOLLAND
BATMAN
THE KILLING JOKE
THE DELUXE EDITION**

INTRODUCTION
BY TIM SALE



Twenty years ago, writer Alan Moore and artist Brian Bolland gave the world a glimpse of the events that made the Joker who he is. Now their brilliantly nightmareish vision returns in a new, definitive edition.

He's the Batman's most unplayable foe—a mad criminal genius whose insane, amoral brilliance even the world's greatest detective, *Bat*, the Joker was not always this way. Before he became the Clown Prince of Crime, before a single, fateful day, seared his face and warped his mind forever, he was just the sort of person the Dark Knight has dedicated his life to protecting—a common man.

What happened to transform this average citizen into the greatest evil Gotham City has ever known? Can Batman stop the Joker from dragging Commissioner Gordon and his daughter Barbara into his world of murderous madness? And can she save two innocent lives at a moment of dual darkness? *Before* by *Tim Sale*.

Presented by a fine line with stark, stunning new coloring by *Brian Bolland*, *BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE* Alan Moore's unforgettable meditation on the razor-thin line between sanity and insanity, between the villain's control and a tragedy.





BATMAN THE KILLING JOKE ALAN MOORE BRIAN BOLLAND



BATMAN THE KILLING JOKE

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